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ABSTRACT

This monograph presents opinions on youth and the family viewed from a variety of perspectives. Authors of the seven articles were participants in an Interdisciplinary Faculty-Student-Community Seminar which focused on different aspects of youth. Topics covered by the papers include goals and dimensions of the family; functions of the family; some major tasks of the family such as teaching sexuality and moral development; dealing with conflicts from the perspectives of a social agency, the family council, and community corrections; some examples of the changing awareness of today's schools; legislative response to the relationship of youth and the family; and closing comments. Some general concerns emerged from the presentations: (1) change is so rapid and unprecedented that no one knows what kind of world youth should be prepared for or the form the family will take in the future; (2) during adolescence, tremendous anxiety develops in both parents and children and they do not know how to handle it; (3) there is no right way to parent, but the results of parenting begin appearing in the adolescent; and (4) we must find out more since the family will continue to exist in some form for a long time. A suggested reading list concludes the monograph. (ND)

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Youth and the Family

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NOTE:

Each academic year from 1969 to 1976, the Center for Youth Development and Research sponsored a monthly two-hour Interdisciplinary Faculty-Student-Community Seminar which focused on different aspects of a general topic related to youth.

The focus in 1975-76 — the seventh continuous year of the Seminar — was Youth and the Family.

The Center's purpose in programming this Seminar was to bring practitioners, researchers, and students together to share ideas, information, observations and questions, and to stimulate thought and action. No attempt was made in the Seminar to exhaust a subject or solve a problem. It was left to Seminar participants to maximize in their various and unique ways the experience of the Seminar.

This monograph, written and edited by Susan Welch, reflects the thinking of Seminar participants and resource persons and not necessarily the position of the Center. Dr. Gisela Konopka, Director of the Center for Youth Development and Research, was the moderator of the Seminar. Resource persons to the Seminar are identified in the text; affiliations of Seminar participants are listed in the Appendix.

Just as in agriculture the work that precedes planting, as also planting itself, is certain and easy; but after that which is planted takes life, there is in raising it a great variety of methods and no little difficulty; so it is with men; to plant them requires little industry, but after they are born, we undertake the burden of varied care, full of anxiety and fear, in training them bringing them up.

Montaigne

INTRODUCTION

Attitudes about child-rearing and the family are linked inextricably with attitudes about what it means to be human. All human activities are conditioned by the reality that people live together, and the necessity of dealing with the care and nurture of offspring links modern man with his most remote ancestors, as well as the most perfected individuals imaginable in the ages to come. The phenomenal changes the United States has undergone since the turn of the century have created a new environment for all of our institutions, an environment that is not a passive receptacle of people, but an active transformer of their lives. The transition from agricultural to urban society, a mushrooming population, greater bureaucratization, increased cultural heterogeneity and many other factors have metamorphosized the structure of our society. The family has traditionally been the shock absorber for social change; now, subjected to enormous pressure from every direction, it has sometimes faltered, depriving many people of their primary source of emotional support.

In our country, many people have the time and money to experiment on their families and their conceptions of the family — as well as their nervous systems, their psyches, their bodies, and their souls. Alternative lifestyles seem a reaction to the absence of support traditionally provided by the family — they offer a refuge from isolation. Some people move toward less structured, more tribal relationships, in apparent retaliation against a mechanized society. But many of our speakers on "Youth and the Family" this year, while acknowledging the tearing effect on the family of modern stresses, saw tremendous potential for positive change in the disruptions. While it must be acknowledged that some old family patterns are being torn apart, individuals have become free to liberate themselves from old family pitfalls. Upheaval provides an opportunity for reorganization. Improved communication techniques permit all people to cut down on interpersonal distance in their relationships if they are willing to work at it, either within the family or outside of it.

Whether man will be destroyed by his own aggressive impulses is the central problem of our age, and many Seminar presentations touched on the breaking down of barriers between individuals. It is in the family that most people first learn to identify and control their impulses, aggressive or otherwise. We cannot assume that children will step into adulthood in a challenging and perplexing world and automatically know how to act responsibly, speakers said. We must listen and learn to share our own

values with the young, even if we know they will be disagreed with or subject to question. Adults must be aware of the effects of their actions on the future lives of their children, and be ready to explain their understanding of their own actions and their perceptions of the world.

The purpose of this monograph is to present and contrast the most important points made by the Seminar's speakers on "Youth and the Family" during the academic year 1975-76. The method used is to paraphrase the speakers' words, and to group together comments made by discussants which pertain to the same broad areas. The comments have been edited to focus on the issues.

The following concerns emerged from the presentations overall:

(1) Change is so rapid and so unprecedented today that no one seems to be sure just what kind of world youth should be prepared for, or the form the family will take in the future.

Many of today's children will work, as adults, at occupations which do not now exist. Many young people turn away not only from institutions and bureaucracy, but from all ideational systems; with the great emphasis on non-verbal forms of communication and altered states of consciousness, some even seem to turn away from language itself. The mass media make it impossible to compartmentalize life or cut one's self off from life in the outside world except at great psychic cost. Although recognition of individual differences seems to characterize attitudes in the schools and in corrections, the consequences of making a poor adjustment to adult responsibilities are severe because there is often no strong family structure to fall back upon.

(2) During adolescence, tremendous anxiety develops on the part of both parents and children and we don't know how to handle it. The entire family undergoes a tremendous upheaval when the children reach adolescence because the power system within the family alters and the absolute changes which the future holds are clearly foreseen. Many adults are threatened when adolescents start challenging them on their values and many adolescents are disturbed to find that their parents are imperfect. Separation anxiety abounds on both sides.

(3) There is no right way to parent — proper parenting depends on what you want for your child — but parents begin to see the results of their parenting in the adolescent. If parents do a thorough and responsible job of sharing their values, they need not be alarmed when confronted with their adolescent's natural and healthy need to experiment. Also, values imparted implicitly are shown, to the chagrin of many parents, to have just as powerful an impact as values directly communicated.

(4) Many feel that we do not know much about the family. It has been taken for granted for ages — literally. That we must make it our business to find out more about the family and how it operates was the opinion of several speakers. Despite reports to the contrary, the family, weak or strong, nuclear or extended, looks to be around for a long time.

This monograph is comprised of opinions on youth and the family viewed from a variety of perspectives. Marvin Ack, Vice President for Human Ecology at the Children's Health Center, Minneapolis, gives an

overview of the goals and dimensions of parenting in relation to youth; Barbara Beatt, Director of Teens-Learning-About-Children Program, Agricultural Extension Service, University of Minnesota, outlines some functions of the family and how they come into question when the children reach adolescence. Two major tasks of the family, sexual socialization and moral development, are viewed in separate presentations: Gerhard Neubeck, professor of family social science, University of Minnesota, and Sally Kraska, graduate teaching assistant in family social science, University of Minnesota, give their opinions on how parental attitudes affect the sexual awareness of young people; and James Rest, professor of educational psychology, University of Minnesota, shows the interrelationship of parents' and children's moral judgment values and their cross-cultural variations. That does not mean they are always the same. Conflicts within the family, from everyday irritations to serious upheavals that put adolescents in courts and prisons, are dealt with by three speakers: Earl Beatt, Director of Family and Children's Services, Minneapolis, focuses on the nature of the youth-family conflicts brought to his agency; the Kilkelly family, brought to the seminar by Bill and Miriam Pew, Directors of St. John's Hospital Marriage and Family Education Center, in St. Paul, show how their family council helps them solve difficulties in a manner usually amenable to all; and a panel from Minneapolis correctional facilities discusses youth in community corrections, and the role of the family in community corrections. Ways in which junior and senior high schools have changed in response to the requirements and concerns of modern youth are presented by several Minneapolis public school social workers. Sen. Jerome Hughes, chairman of the Minnesota State Education Committee of the Minnesota State Senate, explores issues confronting the family and describes current legislation that is responsive to issues involving youth and the family.

The upshot of this variety of presentations, as Gisela Konopka points out in her closing comments, is a mosaic rather than a monolithic arrangement or compendium. Ours is a systems age, and the speakers show awareness of the necessity of dealing with the interplay of effects and consequences on multiple levels. Everything must be looked at in context, and everything is altered when a new and relevant perspective is introduced. Increasing stresses caused by a burgeoning population, a technological, bureaucratized society, the breakdown of racial and social barriers, the growing distrust of ideologies, and the overwhelming impact of mass communication technology have developed a world that we are just now beginning to find words for. Techniques for social control that have worked within families and other small units for millenia have been weakened by the gigantic strength and power of modern institutions and bureaucracies. As we learn to formulate verbally what has indeed happened perhaps we will be able to isolate those questions which most need to be asked. It is hoped that this monograph stimulates awareness of the complexity of the issues and the challenges facing man and all his systems today.

7 *Susan Welch, Editor*

I. GOALS AND DIMENSIONS OF PARENTING

Derived from comments by Marvin Ack
Children's Health Center, Minneapolis

Summary: The primary goal of parenting is to rear a responsible, emotionally-healthy individual capable of mature, independent functioning, but that goal is impeded by many factors in our complex society. Parents and adolescents both undergo tremendous anxiety when young people begin to move away from the family circle — parents do not want to let go and adolescents are ambivalent about whether they want to leave. Letting the young make their own mistakes is the best policy, Ack believes.

Although studies demonstrate that the best way to rear an emotionally-healthy individual is within a stable family structure, most of today's young people are not growing up in that situation. Youth today confront a world radically different from the one their parents faced, and the world keeps changing so fast and on so many different levels that it is difficult to remain securely sure that anything will be the same tomorrow as it is today. Fewer than 40 percent of American children are being reared by both biological parents, and 40 to 50 percent of American brides are between 15 and 18. The divorce rate is 33 percent, and unwanted pregnancies have increased 380 percent since the end of World War II. In 1970, the Joint Commission on the Mental Health of Children estimated that 10 million children in the U.S. were in need of immediate psychiatric care. Today that estimate is 14 million.

Futurists see change progressing at an ever-more-rapid rate. Predictions are that 50 percent of today's elementary school children will work at jobs that currently do not exist. By the year 2000, 96 percent of our working population will be engaged in some human-service-related activity, so we'll all go around treating each other in one way or another. We'll only need 4 percent of the population to satisfy all of our agricultural and industrial needs. The question facing parents and people concerned with the family is whether we are rearing young people capable of facing many uncertainties, and able to take an effective part in such a society. If we are not, more and more people will break down under stress or turn to some sort of chemical avoidance of an unbearable reality.

It is questionable whether the American "success" ethic is helpful or beneficial to individuals. It seems pointless to push people to exceed themselves, become "the best," when there is very limited room at the top, and qualities other than hard work and excellence may determine who gets to the top of a power hierarchy. Ack said that when he was a lecturer for the World Health Organization in Denmark he was surprised to discover that Danish children would be reprimanded for behavior that in the U.S. would earn praise. A Danish child is criticized by his parents for

trying to get too far ahead of his group, while an American child who gets too far ahead is commended for his leadership qualities. It thus becomes easy for the Danes to support a socialized system in which they are taxed at a minimum of 57 percent, and in which all health and human-related services are free from childhood on. "They are taught early on that their major task is to help the group, and those who try to out-distance the group will be disciplined, punished, ostracized." This might be an important perspective for American parents to consider in preparing young people for the future; a competitive attitude may be detrimental to the evolution of American society. A major rethinking of overriding individualism as virtually a national attitude may be imperative.

There is no single correct method of rearing a child, because what parents do depends upon the kinds of children they want, what they want to promote for the child as an adult, what values they hold dear. Our educational system has encouraged us to believe that the major crucial factor in creating an enlightened society is information; this is untrue. Information alone does not lead to sophisticated and mature functioning. We define learning as telling somebody something: We told them, therefore they learned it. This is ridiculous. Parents tend to treat children according to the ways in which they were parented. It's a rare parent who can read material on child-rearing and use that material: most of us do what was done to us. Parents hit because they have to hit, not because they haven't heard that it is incorrect.

Day care centers, which seem to be a trend of the future, may be problematical as far as child welfare is concerned and disastrous in terms of proper parenting, particularly if they are staffed by people who know nothing about child development. Children learn best through a loving relationship, and it is difficult to provide that through multiple care givers. The ever-present, consistently-loving parent best shows the child how to master life's frustrations, a major purpose of parenting. Ack cited a longitudinal study by Lois Murphy, a correlation of infancy and later behavior, which showed a nearly perfect correlation between the infant's quality of feeding and his attention span as a child at school. The results show that when a child is feeding well, when he is happy, he roots at the breast or bottle; the child who is uncomfortable will become fidgety, and that pattern seems to follow through.

The crucial thing in teaching parenting is timing. Learning occurs only when the material has relevance to the life of the individual, when he is in actual process. The more active the learner, the better his chances of learning. Learning occurs when the experiences are pleasurable and when the learner feels respected.

Parenting requires as much intelligence, astuteness, devotion and artistic ability as any job on earth. Currently a poor job of parenting is being done in the U.S. and professionals in the mental health profession aren't helping enough. We all need more of a commitment to the welfare of children and youth.

The major task of parenting is to create an independent, functioning human being, capable of moving away and living a rewarding life. One of

the difficulties of adolescence is that the children begin to grow away from the family and the parents get anxious. Separation is the most ubiquitous of all anxieties, Ack believes. There is more evidence of separation anxiety in the general population than he has ever seen of castration anxiety or any of the other doctrinaire Freudian anxieties. Parents find it hard to let children go away and children themselves are ambivalent about whether they want to grow up or not. When children try to do something and err they learn a great deal. Your opinion of yourself is greatly enhanced every time you successfully complete anything. You're always better off letting a child try something and make his own mistakes — this may be the proper approach for the entire child-rearing process.

II. FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

Derived from comments by Barbara Beatt
Teens-Learning-About-Children Program
Agricultural Extension Service, University of Minnesota

Summary: A family's power structure changes radically when the children become adolescents. The family is a system and one aspect of a system can't change without altering all the other aspects. Responsibilities and obligations to the family are called into question, values are challenged. At this time, when youth begin to reach out and move out, the parents have a chance for a new start.

The term "adolescence" seems to conjure up a picture of impending doom and gloom for many people, like those who say, "Just think, you're going to have three adolescents all at once," as if they're offering condolences. There doesn't have to be a negative connotation to adolescence and what it does to parents. The power arrangement in a family changes dramatically when the children become adolescents, but the conflicts can be used as occasions for the growth of the entire family. In Chinese, the word "crisis" can mean opportunity or it can mean hazard. Opportunity is the key word here.

Disruption occurs in the family during the children's adolescence for many reasons. The young people are expanding their worlds physically — they go more places, do more things, without their parents and with peers. Many of them have a massive body of knowledge which they're trying to put to use to challenge their parents' or anybody else's conceptions. It is a time of ambiguity and ambivalence for parents and children alike. The adolescent's quest for a lifestyle, his experimentation, can be very jarring to parents. They wonder if their goals in child-rearing have been off or whether they've made mistakes in communicating values. Everyone's self-doubt gets into the act. That's why adolescence has to be looked on as a family affair.

Many parts of the family system are affected by the change in certain individuals when they are in certain stages of their development.

Delegation of responsibilities is a function of the family. During adolescence some parents begin to wonder about the economic accountability of their offspring. Adolescents, as is well known, have a tremendous desire for money. Sixty-seven billion dollars is spent annually by adolescents on discretionary items, bringing to mind quite naturally the economic responsibility that can be negotiated in a family. At what age should an adolescent be contributing to the family economic pool? How much control should parents have, if any, over the way adolescents spend their own money? These questions can disrupt the family's economic subsystem.

The family's labor subsystem is also affected by adolescence. Adolescents are obviously loaded with capabilities, so what they should be expected to do becomes an issue. Are they now supposed to do all their housework, all their laundry, and have assigned chores?

The affect and support system is another vital function of the family that gets shaken up during adolescence, with younger adolescents in particular beginning to shy away from affectionate physical contact with their parents and turning it toward the peer group. This transfer can be disturbing to parents who have been spending a good deal of time and energy in their nurturing and supportive roles. This is an ideal opportunity for a couple to get themselves together in a new kind of organization for affection and support — they can reestablish a couple identity.

Power within a family is basically decision-making. How do parents react when Johnny, after participating for 17 years in the family ritual of decorating the tree on Christmas Eve, decides he would rather go out on a date instead? It may seem that adolescents are going away from the family, and parents feel lost, isolated, left out. Still, virtually every adolescent deeply desires affirmation about being himself. This can be done in words or done in gestures, but it must be true affirmation, not just "you're okay."

Underlying all the subsystems in a family is the value system. Basically that comes from the parents and they are the models. The multi-generational similarity of family members would not be as astounding as it is were it not for the significance of a value system being passed down. Values have to be prized highly and cherished; one has to stand up for them. They have to be chosen freely, and that means looking at a number of alternatives. Parents shouldn't get upset about an adolescent's changing values. Young people have to experiment.

III. SOME MAJOR TASKS OF THE FAMILY

Sexuality

Derived from comments by Gerhard Neubeck
Professor of Family Social Science, University of Minnesota and
Sally Kraska, Graduate Teaching Assistant in Family Social Science
University of Minnesota

Summary: Family members frequently live isolated in their own sexual worlds, transmitting covert messages about sex which augment feelings of separateness and shame. A tense, uptight attitude about sexuality is established in a family without anyone realizing how it happened. Despite all the publicity surrounding sexuality, the current generation is really no better informed about sex than were their grandparents. Today's families are doing a poor job of producing sexually-healthy adults because of the lack of communication.

Family members seldom share sexual thoughts; they are often made uncomfortable by the idea of mother, father, sister or brother as sexual beings. Since most people are frequently aware of sex-related thoughts and feelings, this amounts to a large area of repression.

Whether parents are aware of it or not, the first sexualization of a child comes through non-verbal messages. When a mother sees her child with an erection, even if her tension level simply goes up, the child is probably getting some kind of a message. Parents in general want to deny the sexuality of their children because they are uncomfortable with their own sexuality. The child will derive from this discomfort his own feelings — and his parents' hang-ups — about sex.

In a child's life there are certain milestones of sexual socialization. The way toilet training is handled by the parents can easily convey double messages. On the one hand, the child is praised for controlling his functions. On the other, it is communicated that going to the toilet is somehow "not nice"; parents often emphasize shutting the door, for example. The result of such secrecy is that children learn that their bodily functions are deplorable.

The response the child gets to inquiries about pregnancy can have a strong influence on his developing concepts of sexuality. Too often parents foil their child's natural curiosity about pregnancy by answering questions dishonestly or refusing to answer them.

Attitudes toward masturbation may link up with toilet training to reinforce in the child the prohibition against touching the genitalia. Most parents are uncomfortable about masturbation, and convey to the child, perhaps through facial expression, that it is not all right for him to be enjoying his body.

When a child comes home from school with a new (obscene) word he learned that day and asks for definitions, he is soliciting information, but he is also gauging the parents' response, deriving meaning from the way they react to his inquiry.

Early familiarity with their parents' bodies permits children to become more comfortable with and less preoccupied with their sexuality. By the time they reach puberty, they accept easily the naturalness of what is happening to their bodies. Unfortunately, few families practice sexual frankness. That is why this generation, despite the wide availability of information about sex, is so poorly informed. Repression begins at home.

Moral Development

Derived from comments by James Rest
Professor of Educational Psychology, University of Minnesota

Summary: Moral development progresses in the individual in clearly definable stages which alter over time as cognitive capacity increases, according to Rest, a proponent of the theories of Lawrence Kohlberg. Kohlberg considers the lowest stage to be based on a punishment and obedience orientation, and the highest stage to be based on universal ethical principles. Mothers advanced in moral judgment on Kohlberg's scale tend to have children at similar judgment levels with the mothers indirectly influencing their children by giving them a lot of practice in moral problem solving. Fathers have less influence. It is unclear as yet whether intervention programs can be established to influence moral judgment.

"Heinz and the Drug" is a hypothetical moral dilemma that poses the question of whether a husband should steal a drug that is needed by his dying wife when a druggist who is the sole possessor of the drug demands an exorbitant price. The dilemma has been used by researchers to invite people to start talking about the ways in which they solve moral problems. Researchers then relate people's responses to Kohlberg's six moral stages, each of which represents a characteristic way of looking at a situation.

Responses to the Heinz story keyed into age, upbringing and cultural background. A 17-year-old American reform school inmate said Heinz might not want to keep his wife alive if he wants to marry someone else, someone young and good looking. His explanation was that it is right to follow one's natural instincts. A 10-year-old American boy said Heinz's action should depend on whether or not he loves his wife. A Taiwanese boy said Heinz should steal the drug because if his wife dies he'll have to pay for her funeral, which would cost a lot. A Malaysian boy said Heinz should steal because he needs his wife to cook for him.

The first response is appropriate to a consumer society in which one trades in his car every year. Responses tend to key into cultural peculiarities. All the above responses are Stage Two responses on Kohlberg's

scale, the "instrumental relativist orientation," in which there is no sense of right and wrong. This orientation is utilitarian and defines right action as that which satisfies one's own needs. It is this basic way that people orient to problems that researchers attempt to capture in the moral stage scoring guide.

People change as they get older in the ways they analyze and solve problems in the moral sphere. They start in Stage One, the punishment and obedience orientation, and evolve toward Stage Six, the universal ethical principle orientation. Kohlberg's theory attempts to show that people change because their understanding of situations is increased with their enlarging cognitive capacity. As people become capable of thinking in terms of higher stage concepts, they tend to use them.

The most interesting study on the relationship of moral development and the family to date is one done by Connie Holstein. She found that the moral judgment scores of mothers are related to the moral judgment scores of their children. Fathers' scores have no relationship. But the more advanced the mothers are in moral judgment, the more they tend to have offspring with advanced judgment. A mother who is at Stage Five or Six of Kohlberg's scale did not have a child at Stage Five or Six, but her child tended to be more advanced than the child of a Stage Three mother. Holstein also found that when children were given high encouragement within the family to discuss their opinions they tended to be more advanced in moral judgment development, and parents who encouraged their children to discuss freely were high in moral judgment themselves.

The influence is an indirect one. The mothers were not presenting lessons that their children were memorizing and learning directly. The implication is that mothers have an indirect influence in facilitating development. They give their children practice at moral problem solving by bringing them into high encouragement discussion groups and through their own example.

IV. DEALING WITH CONFLICTS

Perspective from a Social Agency

Derived from comments by Earl Beatt
Director of Family and Children's Services, Minneapolis

Summary: Children tend to be like their parents. One of the major problems in modern professional practice is that we do not know very much about the family and have not learned to combine theory and practice. Adolescence is a crucial time for experimentation and the proving of values. It is a difficult time for the parents because they have to learn how to let go. We always focus on the remedial care of children after problems have progressed so far that we have to take the children out of the home. We should focus more on quality care within the home, and learn more about the family and how to work with it.

Because of the orientation of social work education toward disfunctional behavior and malfunction in the individual, a strong anti-parent child advocacy perspective is noticeable on the part of many professionals. That perspective makes many professionals lose sight of the fact that despite all the talk about rebellion and rejection of authority, children tend to be like their parents. When children were asked in a recent survey if they thought their parents were an important influence on their lives, 90 percent said yes, and 59 percent said they believe marriage will be as important in the year 2000 as it is now.

A new book by Roger Payne indicates that if the first years of providing values to children are solid years, by the time children reach adolescence experimentation should by all means take place. The vast majority of children, whether they are rebelling or not, are going to come out fine parents and adults. We lose perspective on the positive whole because we're so zeroed in on the malfunctioning parts of society that command so much attention.

Although the differences are usually stressed, it is the similarities between parents and children which are particularly noticeable: They often share the same social class, religious beliefs, education, aspirations, racial views, in greater or lesser degrees — some very crucial things are similar.

There is sometimes a question between professionals as to whether ethical values should or should not be instilled in teaching or therapy. Some try to avoid transmitting values because they are personal values, but what are you really trying to do, as a professional, other than getting your biases out? There are many arguments pro and con about this subject. Beatt said he believes you do impart values as a parent to your children, and these values specify legitimate paths to your own view of attainment, they elaborate rewards, they abstractly resolve conflicts, and sometimes suggest appropriate compensations for failure. Parents sharing values and goals with adolescents must strive for consistency because

inconsistency forces the child into passivity — to avoid violating the norms of the family, he backs off. Sensitive adolescents reject formally espoused values and act in accordance with what they judge to be the covert values expressed in the family, he said.

Beatt delineated five major complaints parents have when they come to his agency: Children acting out in school; children running away; family conflicts about power, control and respect; problems with young people using drugs and alcohol; and problems with children acting out sexually. A primary complaint of young people is that they are not understood by their parents. Actually, some of the kids are well understood and some are not at all. They give us a message that harks back to the whole issue of values. We spend much too little time discussing values in the earlier years. Then comes the desire for independence and decision-making and experimentation. It is time for the parents to let go, but they won't let go. Part of the problem is that they don't trust their children's values because they haven't prepared them well enough.

Another common complaint of youngsters who come to Family and Children's Services is sibling comparison. One child is identified as the symptom bearer, the scapegoat, and the family zeroes in on that particular person. Knowing that person is usually a beautiful way, diagnostically, of finding out what is going on in the family system. Another growing concern of children is their parents' alcoholism; this coincides with parents' concern over their childrens' use of drugs and alcohol. Children are often crying for help, wanting limits set because of their own anxieties about what they are doing and all of the guilt that has been developed by parents pressing too much. Sex is not as much of an issue as it used to be, and parents are more tolerant about wanting children to stay at home rather than move out. There is an increased concern about women's role in the family.

The professional focus in social service is usually on the care of children away from their own homes after disaster has struck. We give insufficient attention to the possibililty of the child remaining at home. This is because we know so little about the family we lose confidence when the child goes back to it. Our efforts are concentrated on providing quality child care, foster homes, institutions, group homes, outside the home. We have to raise the question, what about the families of these children? When do we move toward providing services to families before the situation becomes so bad that the child has to be removed? Family life education and therapy should come to be viewed as complimentary phases of a single process, with one phase dealing with mastery and the handling of judgments, and the other emphasizing the handling of feelings.

The Family Council, A Method for Dealing with Conflict

Derived from comments by Bill and Miriam Pew, who direct St. John's Hospital Marriage and Family Education Center, located in St. Paul, and who brought in the Kilkelly family, which is made up of Daniel, the father; Vonnie, the mother; and four children: Mark, 14; Margie, 11; Mike, 9; and Megan, 5.

Summary: The family council of Daniel and Vonnie Kilkelly demonstrates in practice the application of some of the theories and concerns about open communication expressed during the course of the Seminars. A major task of parenting is the creation of adults capable of independent functioning, and the Kilkellys seem particularly sensitive to the importance of maintaining values but allowing for a free-flowing communication between all family members. The Pews' purpose in introducing the family was to present an example of family interaction based on mutual respect and caring.

Miriam Pew explained why she believes the Kilkellys are successful at working things out together: There is leadership. The parents are firm and kind. There is a parental coalition, with the mother and father backing each other up. There are strong affectional ties, and an acceptance of adult roles. The children are listened to with respect. Communication among family members is spontaneous, clear and direct, and the feeling tone is strong and unambiguous. The sense of humor is highly developed. The family is able to look at many sides of a problem, and is willing to put an effort into problem solving. Finally, time is perceived as passing; it is openly accepted that everything ends.

Traditional folk wisdom decrees that troublesome people be dealt with in group meetings. It is realistic to see deviants as a concern of the entire community. Family councils follow this principle.

The Kilkellys have been having family council meetings for a little over three years. The council has a rotating chairman who calls the meeting to order. The council never operates on majority rule, but always on a consensus basis — everyone must agree that he can live with the particular decision. It was recommended that decisions be made for the duration of one week, the week to come, then remain open for evaluation and discussion.

The family discussed a conflict which occurred when the boys wanted to buy a basketball net with the family funds and daughter Margie objected because she was afraid the boys would dominate it. After discussion it was decided that the boys could use the net at even hours, the girls at odd hours.

The parents believe their children are well equipped by the family council for the "real world." The person best qualified to deal with a highly competitive situation is the person who has learned to compete with

himself and not with others. Children raised in this manner may become frustrated, as anyone would, when encountering irrational bureaucratic situations, but in the family they have gained knowledge and skills in problem solving and handling frustration that can serve them in many situations.

Miriam Pew pointed out that before telling a story that related to her daughter Margie, Vonnie Kilkelly carefully asked her daughter for permission. This was an object lesson, she pointed out: Often parents tell stories about their children without asking permission and the children become embarrassed. Mrs. Pew observed that the family was physically comfortable with each other. There was a great deal of touching, affection and caring. The family exhibited a mutual sensitivity to feelings and mutual respect.

Community Corrections — A Panel Response

Derived from comments by a panel made up of three administrators in Minneapolis correctional facilities: Barb Andrus, of Zion Northside Group Home; Thomas Christian of Portland House; DeeDee Molean, of the Group Home of the City.

Summary: Community correctional facilities sometimes try to turn their staffs and programs into surrogate family structures for their participants, and they often make an intensive effort to get the family to participate in the program. Often the main problem is with the parents, not the young person. Most facilities try to keep the individual away from home as briefly as possible. Most adolescent girls in correctional facilities come from deeply-troubled backgrounds and their parents often have a tremendous feeling of powerlessness because they are ill-equipped to function in modern society.

Thomas Christian's facility treats male offenders 18 to 30 years of age. He believes the family is the basic primary element in society and that it is taking a lot of battering. What they try to do at Portland House is create a family atmosphere, a brotherhood. They work with the young person's family, invite members into the house, show them the program. The families give many insights. The staff's attitude is: We are working with you. You are the primary source of learning for this young person. You have not failed. Just because he hasn't picked up on everything you were able to give him doesn't mean there is something wrong with you.

Whether an offender has a bad relationship with his family or a good one, he's going to come back to the neighborhood, to the family, to a brother or a cousin — the young person may have turned off on his family, but the parents frequently have given up. You can turn a kid back on to his family, but it's hard to get a family, a parent, to "ungive up." So our

concept of family is basic; we try to serve. Sometimes we are like a father or mother, but most of all we try to get across that we are persons dealing with persons. When we bring the family into our group therapy, and we try to encourage this, then the group gets the family side of the picture. Things can become easier when the youth finds his parents are willing to do some changing and are willing to work with us to give him a little more family continuity.

Barb Andrus said that at her facility the concept of the family is primary. She works at a group home designed specifically to meet the needs of the Black girl, and the extended family is very important in the perspective of Black culture. She said the staff people are seen as models for the young woman and as family for the girls' families. We want the same things for the girls that the parents want, she said: . . . To see them functioning without as much hassle, and with less communication breakdown. Parents are very frustrated when their children come to the group home. It is very threatening to them that someone has made the decision, and in many cases it is the girl who has made the decision to live outside her home. We tell the parent, what we need to do is stop feuding and fighting — let's sit down and see what's happening with you and your kid. You could be part of the problem, you might not be any part of the problem. We don't have the answers. But having the young person in the Home means somebody has identified a problem.

Adolescents are pretty much like we were as young people, only they have highly sophisticated tools today to get back at us, Andrus said. Parents are often afraid, and that has to be respected. The experience of every parent who comes into the group home is valuable. The staff refuse to be "experts." They see themselves as offering facilities, with much supportive feedback to give. The average length of stay in the home is four months; it is best for a girl to be away from home as briefly as possible. It is important at Zion that as soon as the girl enters, a strong effort is made to get her family involved in family counseling. If that does not work, staff tries to get the family to come to the group home, make it obvious that they are welcome at any time, and that the staff is there to communicate. Often mothers who are having a problem with one particular child are isolated and afraid. They are not going to bring up in a chat with the next door neighbor that Jane is staying out all night or smoking pot. But if she can share that with some of the other parents who have worked through or are in the process of working through a similar situation, family counseling is less threatening.

Dee Dee Molean had gathered statistics on the families of girls in her group home, which is the outgrowth of a facility that worked with a delinquent subculture of young people and has been involved in the same neighborhood for seven years. Only one girl came from a family with both parents living together, she reported. Two families made over $15,000, one family earned between $10,000 and $15,000, one family between $5000 and $8000, and three families were on public assistance. Within the families, in all cases at least one parent has had or is having problems with alcohol. Each of the girls had been in the court system. Six of the 7 girls had spent some time in the juvenile center or an institution, and three of

the families had had one parent in an institution. All the girls had brothers or sisters in an institution.

The parents were tremendously affected by a feeling of powerlessness that extended to all areas of their lives. Most of the families originally came from rural areas. Most of the families were authoritarian in structure until the authority broke down.

V. THE CHANGING AWARENESS OF TODAY'S SCHOOLS — Some Examples

A panel made up of Minneapolis public school social workers:
Helen Tyler, director of social services;
Eleanor Felker, coordinator of social work training;
Pat Davis, Marshall-University High School;
Ruth Hyland, Home School;
Kathi Sample, Bryant Junior High;
Owen Turnlund, Sheridan Junior High.

Summary: In simpler days the child had many ways to learn social and vocational roles, but that is no longer true. Today's child has but one habilitating agency — the school. The school has the sole responsibility for training, educating, acculturating and certifying American children. Many children are in school today who would have been in mental health residential institutions in the past. The trend is to bend what's there in the schools to meet the children's needs. Adolescents need adults very much, and an effort is made to provide sympathetic adults in the school of today. Schools are emphasizing total life education, to help youngsters develop skills for coping with life as well as academic skills. Parents are being encouraged to help plan curricula and school programs for their youngsters.

The mental health movement brought back to the community schools many children who would have been in mental health residential institutions in the 1960's. School systems now are obligated by law to provide these students with an education. We are in the process of responding to what is happening in corrections, Helen Tyler said, following their move into community corrections. When one institution changes direction, it can't help but affect the other institutions that are serving young people as well.

The school makes a unique contribution by being the only place that brings masses of young people together as they are going through the adolescent phase. Adolescence is not a period in life in which one does not

need adults. There may be many difficulties even in the best of families. Because of the intense feelings adolescents have toward their parents it is sometimes hard for them to talk with them. But that does not mean the young do not want to talk to adults, and in the schools they can find adults — caring, reaching-out people who are there and available. This is not just the classroom teacher and the social worker. There is the janitor, the school nurse, all people who are around to help provide balance to young people as they cross that bridge, according to Eleanor Felker. Schools today are making an effort to give the young skills for coping with life. In the Minneapolis school today there are 20 autistic children. There is a place in our schools for that kind of extreme.

High school students are often very lonely, according to Pat Davis. As students progress from elementary school to junior high to high school, the staff becomes far less concerned about their real fears, hurts and anxieties. In elementary school much warm parenting is going on. But as children get older, more confrontative, we seem to be less concerned with their hurts. When we move into the senior high we almost seem to shut the door and do what we call content orientation. Many secondary school teachers tend to look at themselves as teachers of math or English rather than as teachers of young people.

Davis said most of his caseload at Marshall-University High consists of 9th graders who probably were not doing badly the year before. They are disoriented because of the sudden lack of concern. Too much is made of the peer group. Adolescents turn to the peer group becasuse they cannot find appropriate adults. When children reach adolescence they want to have good experiences with their peers, but there is high risk involved in that alienation for not being accepted. There is a pull backward into the family, where there is more security. If they cannot find satisfactory adult contacts there, they go back to the peer group.

When children reach adolescence they become more confrontative. They are talking more about values, about principles, about what makes sense. It scares many adults when young people tell them that what they are teaching does not make sense, and the kids are alienated by such fear. In the schools we need to provide adults who care about young people.

Kathi Sample has been developing a program on human sexuality at a junior high school and at one time she hoped youngsters could start discussing sexual matters and values with their parents. Now that no longer seems feasible to her because many parents fear their youngsters' sexual involvements so much that they freeze up. Also, the kids feel embarrassment. They need a little privacy at that age, and also need time to deal with what they really think, to adjust their values, she said. They can't really do this comfortably with their parents around. In this academic year, Sample is going to consult a parent panel on the development of a sexuality program in the schools in her area.

Home School is a continuing education center for pregnant high school girls, one of the first ever established in the country. Ruth Hyland, of the school, said the young woman is seen as a total person who is about to become a parent and who is in need of some special considerations, special services. The concern is for her, for the future of her child, and the future of the family she is beginning. Last year, close to 90 percent of the Minneapolis resident students at Home School kept their babies. Most of these mothers are 15 or 16. Home School offers classes in parenting and child care, in addition to the ordinary classes found in any school. Girls get much individual attention.

School personnel have a lot of expertise and could teach parents how to continue being involved with their adolescent children, according to Owen Turnlund, who would like to see more involvement between schools and families. Unfortunately, most teachers, even when they are trying very hard to talk to parents, talk either about the content of their particular course, or the behavior of the child in the classroom when the behavior is inappropriate. We should find ways of getting teachers and parents talking to each other frequently about the good things that happen in the classroom, he said. We are making greater and greater efforts to include parents in planning for their youngsters, especially when their youngsters have special needs. One of the problems continually confronting the schools is that of having students "fit" — even those of us who know better try to do this. In the 1960's, students realized they had a great deal of power, they could close the schools. And these are new problems — so many of our students no longer feel they have to fit into the school programs. We have to design some other ways of helping them learn what they want to do.

VI. LEGISLATIVE RESPONSE TO ONE VIEW OF YOUTH AND THE FAMILY

Derived from comments by Senator Jerome Hughes, Chairman of the Minnesota State Education Committee, and school consultant to the St. Paul public schools

Summary: Some problem analysis needs to be done on the family, which is the most important institution in society. This is an advanced technological society but it is on dubious ground when it comes to morals. Certain kinds of attitudes and habits should be learned young, within the family; when people become adults they can't be forced to learn attitudes they should have absorbed as children at home. A forthcoming Council on the Family, which is being formed by the Minnesota State Legislature, will focus on what is known about the family, and what can be done to help families to function optimally.

The length of the period of adolescence today is extraordinary. Twenty-five years ago it was questionable whether one went to college. Now all young people seem to want to go there; they have long-range goals and stay in the home setting for a long time. This makes the family even more important, for a longer period. The family contains the most potent moral, emotional intellectual, and psychological influences on the life of the individual, and should be recognized as the most powerful institution in society. We need to do problem analysis on the family — observe, see what problems exist, make some judgments on the problems and, last, set some priorities.

The human being is our most important resource and the family is the most important unit in the world, and if the earth and its people are going to have a future they will have to cherish the part of life where human life begins and grows, where dreams and emotions are born and people learn to care for each other.

The following legislation is supportive of these ideas. In recent years in Minnesota we've passed some early childhood and family education legislation and it has as its focus the "elementary attendance area", meaning the area served by one elementary school. There is an advisory committee made up of parents whose children are involved in the program. The program components can vary depending on what the local advisory committee decides. Look at some of the things that can happen: give a childbirth preparation course: see that all children in the elementary attendance area have an early and periodic health screening; have a toy library for the children and an adult library with special materials for parents; have group discussions about parenting, about being a single parent, about child development. The elementary attendance area is the focus because this gives a sense of where the community is. If larger areas are included people don't identify with them.

A Council on the Family is being formed in Minnesota. It is a group of 18 people, five from the Minnesota Senate, five from the House, and eight appointed by the governor. It will look at the family, look at the Council itself, and look at economic status. Hughes advocated this council because there are councils on many things in the legislature but not one on the family.

At the last State Board of Education meeting Hughes proposed that within the curriculum the subject of the family be included as an important entity. Let's tell people they are members of a family and important entities as such, he said. If people do a good job of parenting, we'll spend a lot less on welfare costs and paying teachers to be disciplinarians. To develop quality parents we need to develop models for parenting. The school should supplement the home and support the home, but the primary emphasis ought to be on leadership and learning in the home.

VII. YOUTH AND THE FAMILY, CLOSING COMMENTS

Gisela Konopka, Director,
Center for Youth Development and Research,
Professor, School of Social Work,
University of Minnesota

There is always difficulty in seeing the past from a realistic perspective. People tend to idealize what happened in their youth. As I see it, the sentimental idea that the nuclear, authoritarian family prevented and guarded against every problem in society is a fallacy. When we look at the documentation, we see that for centuries we have had in all societies examples of wonderful family relationships, and examples of disastrous family relationships, as well. We have evidence in many of these families of the "good old days" countless instances of hypocrisy, child abuse, wife beating — as well as instances of warm, supportive, loving relationships.

I would disagree with those who say they see moral decline in our society. What I see is that the family is universal, though the form may change, and that there are wide historical and cultural variations. The Judeo-Christian cultural heritage of a majority of our population shows many examples of the way the family has changed and adapted over the ages. We need only think of our Biblical ancestors who had several wives.

The form of the family must be appropriate to the given societal and cultural environment and it must be related to the goals of the society in rearing its children. When Sparta wanted to cultivate warriors it neglected the education of women; when Athens created philosophers, it focused on the education of upper-class children and totally excluded the slaves.

We must first of all consider what we want for our society. Some major goals are to develop people who can make their own decisions on the ground of ethical considerations; people who feel responsible for taking an

active role in regard to public issues and affairs; people who are capable of allowing themselves to be giving and to form warm, human relationships; and people who respect and enjoy the variety of human beings.

If these are our goals, then the unit which raises children must be congruent and in alignment with these aspirations, dedicated to rearing these kinds of adults. Whether the family is nuclear or extended, the suitable kind of atmosphere must permeate it.

I see many young people moving in the direction of these goals. The form of the family tends to mirror political form, and I believe the family unit worldwide is gradually moving toward greater democracy, with greater tolerance for individual differences. There is no single right answer, but a splendid variety of perspectives and angles of approach. In the future, I see the evolution of a family system based on mutual respect among the family members, with a much more positive relationship between the generations, and opportunities for individual self-determination.

I am impressed by the advances I see in that direction.

VIII. APPENDICES

Suggested Reading List

I. The following are books and articles referred to in the text.

Holstein, Constance. "The Relation of Children's Moral Judgment Level to that of Their Parents and to Communication Patterns in the Family." *Readings in Child Development.* ed. by R. Smart and M. Smart. New York: Macmillan, 1972.

Based on Lawrence Kohlberg's six stages of moral judgment, this study was designed to test the effects of parental influence on moral development within one age group and one social class. Findings show a high correlation between the moral judgment values of mothers and those of the children.

Kohlberg, Lawrence. "The Child as a Moral Philosopher." *Psychology Today.* (September, 1968), 25-30.

A developmental scheme describing the levels and stages of moral thinking elaborated over the period of a 12-year study of a group of 75 boys. A good introduction to the topic.

_____. "Stage and Sequence: The Cognitive Developmental Approach to Socialization Theory and Research." *Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research.* ed. by D.A. Goslin. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969.

A most comprehensive discussion of this particular research approach; also includes an extensive bibliography.

Murphy, Lois B. & Moriarty, Alice E. *Vulnerability, Coping and Growth from Infancy to Adolescence.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976.

Describes how a group of children, observed at the Menninger Foundation from birth through adolescence, attempted to deal with internal and external stresses, and how the stress often promoted growth. Medical, psychological and psychiatric data are presented and analyzed.

Paine, Roger W. *We Never Had Any Trouble Before: First Aid for Parents of Teenagers.* New York: Stein and Day, 1975.

A former director of a suburban youth drop-in center gives a personal account of his experiences with adolescents and summarizes his views of adolescence today.

II. Publications of the Center for Youth Development and Research related to the topic:

Belbas, Nancy. *Youth Responds to Social Systems.* Seminar Series No. 2. Mpls. Mn: Center for Youth Development and Research, 1971.

Young people express their views of the four institutions which have a major impact on them: the family, public education system, labor market and government.

Konopka, Gisela. "The Changing Family." *Center Quarterly Focus.* I. (January, 1972).

The family is universal and exists in a great variety of forms yet there is much fear, especially in the United States, of the changes the family is undergoing. In the author's opinion, the family is moving in a positive direction, toward true democracy and the acceptance of the human dignity of every person in the family unit.

_____, with Center for Youth Development and Research staff. "Requirements for Healthy Development of Adolescent Youth." *Adolescence.* VIII No. 31 (Fall, 1973).

Describes key concepts and qualities of adolescence, sets forth some conditions for healthy development of adolescent youth and discusses specific obstacles to such development.

III. For a complete listing of family research, consult the following:

Aldous, Joan & Hill, Reuben. *International Bibliography of Research in Marriage and the Family,* 1900-1964, 1965-1972, 1973-1974. Mpls, Mn: University of Minnesota Press, 1967, 1974, 1975.

A computer-produced bibliography of books and articles on family research. The three-volume work represents research published from 1900 to 1974.

Broderick, Carlfred B. ed. *A Decade of Family Research and Action.* Mpls., Mn: National Council on Family Relations, 1970, 1971.

A compilation of 14 articles, each reviewing an important aspect of the family field, constituting a significant inventory of the whole area of family study.

List of Agencies Represented at the Seminar:

American National Red Cross
Big Brothers of America
Big Sister Association, Inc.
Boys' Club of Minneapolis
Camp Fire Girls, Inc.
Children's Health Center
Community Health and Welfare Council
Eastside Neighborhood Services, Inc.
Greater Minneapolis Day Care Association
Greater Minneapolis Girl Scout Council
Hennepin County Court Services
Home of the Good Shepherd
Lind School
Lutheran Social Services, Inc.
Maria Group Home
Minneapolis Family and Children's Service
Minneapolis Girls Clubs
Minneapolis Health Department
Minnesota Department of Corrections
Minnesota Department of Health
Minnesota Department of Manpower Services
Minnesota Resource Center for Social Work Education, Augsburg College
Native American Youth Services
North High Child Development Center
Olson Junior High School
Ramsey Action Program
Ramsey County Social Services
St. Paul Public Schools
St. Paul Youth Service Bureau
The City, Inc.
The Enablers, Inc.
Tri House, Inc.
Volunteers of America, Inc.
West Hennepin Human Services
W. 7th St. Community Center
YWCA
Zion Northside Group Home

List of University Units Represented at the Seminar:

Agricultural Extension Service
College of Education
College of Home Economics
Continuing Education in Social Work
Delinquency Control
Department of Family Social Science
Department of Psychiatry
Educational Administration
4-H
General College
Information and Agricultural Journalism
Office of Student Affairs
School of Nursing
School of Public Health
School of Social Work
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Joe McAuliffe, Director of the Education Division, National 4-H Foundation, Washington, D.C.

Keith McFarland, Dean, College of Home Economics, University of Minnesota

Pearl Mitchell, Volunteer Service Coordinator, Ramsey County Welfare

David Nasby, Executive Director, The City, Inc., Minneapolis

Gerhard Neubeck, Professor, Family Social Science, University of Minnesota

Joseph O'Neal, Community Resource Person

Janet Paper, Community Resource Person

Betty Robb, Community Resource Person

Kenneth Schoen, Commissioner, Department of Corrections, State of Minnesota

Martin Snoke, Assistant Vice-President for Student Affairs, University of Minnesota

Norman Sprinthall, Professor, Department of Psychoeducational Studies, University of Minnesota

David Stanley, Board of Directors, The Enablers, Inc., Minneapolis

Emily Staples, Chairperson, Bicentennial Planning Commission, Hennepin County

Russell Thornton, Chairman, American Indian Studies Department, University of Minnesota

Jack Wallinga, Director off Child Psychiatry, Children's Health Center and Hospital, Minneapolis

Gerhard Weiss, Professor, German and Comparative Literature, University of Minnesota

Frank Wilderson, Assistant Dean of the College of Education, University of Minnesota

Stanley E. Williams, Executive Director, Colon Cancer Control Study, University of Minnesota

Willie Mae Wilson, Executive Director, St. Paul Urban League

Kenneth Young, Director, Hennepin County Court Services